Impact of Fertilizer Pricing on Domestic Units

2394. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether, as a result of some recent decisions on Fertilizer Industry Pricing, the viability of domestic fertilizer plants will be affected, in turn, reducing the domestic production;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to meet the demand of fertilizers, by increasing imports; and

(c) if so, whether any assessment of the impact on international price of fertilizers has been made, normally shoot up whenever there is heavy import by India, leading to higher subsidy on imports, as was the experience in the past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The Government does not expect the adverse impact on the viability of urea units and decline in the production of indigenous urea on account of implementation of policy parameter for the 7th and 8th pricing periods *w.e.f.* 1.7.1997 to 31.3.2000 and 1.4.2000 to 31.3.2003, respectively.

Bids for FACT

2395. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has invited Expression Of Interests (EOI) for the sale of 51 per cent stake in Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd. (FACT);

(b) if so, what are the minimum qualifications fixed for the prospective bidders; and

(c) what is the total asset of FACT, as on 30th September, 2002?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Government has invited Expression Of Interests (EOI) for the sale of 51 per cent stake in Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd. (FACT).

(b) the prospective bidders should have a combined Net Worth in excess of Rs.200 crore as well as Sales in excess of Rs.600 crore as per

the annual accounts of financial year 2001-02. In case of a consortium bid, the financial parameters of the lead bidder must be at least 51% of the amount indicated above.

(c) As on 31.3.2002, the fixed assets of FACT as per audited accounts are Rs.781.22 crore and the net current assets, as on 30.9.2002, are Rs.306.93 crore.

Melting of Glaciers of Himalayas

2396. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Is a blanket of smog chocking South Asia" appearing in the Times of India dated the 13th August, 2001;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that a recent study by the Delhi University in Kullu Valley has revealed that 67 per cent of the 1500 major Glaciers in the Himalayas are receding, which could result in abrupt transition in climatic conditions, causing rise of 9.88 cm in sea level by 2100 and erosion of low lying areas; and

(c) if so, what is Government's perception about this new phenomenon and the steps being contemplated, so that such a situation could be averted?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir. An international collaborative study namely, "Indian Ocean Research Experiment (INDOEX)" has indicated haze over the Indian Ocean. The haze is not a permanent feature of the atmosphere over the Asian region and the surrounding seas. It occurs only during January - March, the season in which INDOEX observations were made in 1999. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has, this year, brought out a report entitled "The Asian Brown Cloud: Climate and other Environmental Impacts" based on INDOEX. The press release of the UNEP launching the said report paints an alarming picture of the impacts of this baze on both regional and global scales. However, most of the concerns expressed therein are not well substantiated by reliable modeling studies or experimental observations.